

process to determine the extent of our participation. And I really appreciate the President's leadership on this issue. Charles Taylor must leave. The United Nations is going to be involved. The United States will work with ECOWAS. The leaders of ECOWAS were at the table, all of whom are concerned about Liberia, as are we, and are concerned about a peaceful western Africa.

**Q.** Does that mean you'll send troops?

**The President.** We're in the process of determining what is necessary to maintain the cease-fire and to allow for a peaceful transfer of power. We're working very closely with ECOWAS. The President of ECOWAS is with us today, the President of Ghana. He and I had a good discussion. I assured him we'll participate in the process. And we're now in the process of determining what that means.

**Q.** Do you have to wait until Mr. Taylor is gone?

**The President.** We're in the process of determining what that means.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:48 a.m. at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, the President referred to President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana; and President Charles Taylor of Liberia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Remarks at Goree Island, Senegal

July 8, 2003

Mr. President and Madam First Lady, distinguished guests and residents of Goree Island, citizens of Senegal, I'm honored to begin my visit to Africa in your beautiful country.

For hundreds of years on this island, peoples of different continents met in fear and cruelty. Today we gather in respect and friendship, mindful of past wrongs and dedicated to the advance of human liberty.

At this place, liberty and life were stolen and sold. Human beings were delivered and sorted and weighed and branded with the marks of commercial enterprises and loaded as cargo on a voyage without return. One of the largest migrations of history was also one of the greatest crimes of history.

Below the decks, the Middle Passage was a hot, narrow, sunless nightmare, weeks and months of confinement and abuse and confusion on a strange and lonely sea. Some refused to eat, preferring death to any future their captors might prepare for them. Some who were sick were thrown over the side. Some rose up in violent rebellion, delivering the closest thing to justice on a slave ship. Many acts of defiance and bravery are recorded; countless others, we will never know.

Those who lived to see land again were displayed, examined, and sold at auctions across nations in the Western Hemisphere. They entered societies indifferent to their anguish and made prosperous by their unpaid labor. There was a time in my country's history when one in every seven human beings was the property of another. In law, they were regarded only as articles of commerce, having no right to travel or to marry or to own possessions. Because families were often separated, many were denied even the comfort of suffering together.

For 250 years, the captives endured an assault on their culture and their dignity. The spirit of Africans in America did not break; yet, the spirit of their captors was corrupted. Small men took on the powers and airs of tyrants and masters. Years of unpunished brutality and bullying and rape produced a dullness and hardness of conscience. Christian men and women became blind to the clearest commands of their faith and added hypocrisy to injustice. A republic founded on equality for all became a prison for millions. And yet in the words of the African proverb, "No fist is big enough to hide the sky." All the generations of oppression under the laws of man could not crush the hope of freedom and defeat the purposes of God.

In America, enslaved Africans learned the story of the Exodus from Egypt and set their own hearts on a promised land of freedom. Enslaved Africans discovered a suffering Saviour and found He was more like themselves than their masters. Enslaved Africans heard the ringing promises of the Declaration of Independence and asked the self-evident question, "Then why not me?"

In the year of America's founding, a man named Olaudah Equiano was taken in bondage to the New World. He witnessed all of

slavery's cruelties, the ruthless and the petty. He also saw beyond the slaveholding piety of the time to a higher standard of humanity. "God tells us," wrote Equiano, "that the oppressor and the oppressed are both in His hands. And if these are not the poor, the brokenhearted, the blind, the captive, the bruised which our Saviour speaks of, who are they?"

Down through the years, African Americans have upheld the ideals of America by exposing laws and habits contradicting those ideals. The rights of African Americans were not the gift of those in authority. Those rights were granted by the Author of Life and regained by the persistence and courage of African Americans, themselves.

Among those Americans was Phyllis Wheatley, who was dragged from her home here in West Africa in 1761, at the age of 7. In my country, she became a poet and the first noted black author in our Nation's history. Phyllis Wheatley said, "In every human breast, God has implanted a principle which we call love of freedom. It is impatient of oppression and pants for deliverance." That deliverance was demanded by escaped slaves named Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth, educators named Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, and ministers of the Gospel named Leon Sullivan and Martin Luther King, Jr.

At every turn, the struggle for equality was resisted by many of the powerful. And some have said we should not judge their failures by the standards of a later time. Yet in every time, there were men and women who clearly saw this sin and called it by name.

We can fairly judge the past by the standards of President John Adams, who called slavery "an evil of colossal magnitude." We can discern eternal standards in the deeds of William Wilberforce and John Quincy Adams and Harriet Beecher Stowe and Abraham Lincoln. These men and women, black and white, burned with a zeal for freedom, and they left behind a different and better nation. Their moral vision caused Americans to examine our hearts, to correct our Constitution, and to teach our children the dignity and equality of every person of every race. By a plan known only to Providence, the stolen sons and daughters of Africa

helped to awaken the conscience of America. The very people traded into slavery helped to set America free.

My Nation's journey toward justice has not been easy, and it is not over. The racial bigotry fed by slavery did not end with slavery or with segregation. And many of the issues that still trouble America have roots in the bitter experience of other times. But however long the journey, our destination is set: liberty and justice for all.

In the struggle of the centuries, America learned that freedom is not the possession of one race. We know with equal certainty that freedom is not the possession of one nation. This belief in the natural rights of man, this conviction that justice should reach wherever the Sun passes, leads America into the world.

With the power and resources given to us, the United States seeks to bring peace where there is conflict, hope where there is suffering, and liberty where there is tyranny. And these commitments bring me and other distinguished leaders of my Government across the Atlantic to Africa.

African peoples are now writing your own story of liberty. Africans have overcome the arrogance of colonial powers, overturned the cruelties of apartheid, and made it clear that dictatorship is not the future of any nation on this continent. In the process, Africa has produced heroes of liberation, leaders like Mandela, Senghor, Nkrumah, Kenyatta, Selassie, and Sadat. And many visionary African leaders, such as my friend, have grasped the power of economic and political freedom to lift whole nations and put forth bold plans for Africa's development.

Because Africans and Americans share a belief in the values of liberty and dignity, we must share in the labor of advancing those values. In a time of growing commerce across the globe, we will ensure that the nations of Africa are full partners in the trade and prosperity of the world. Against the waste and violence of civil war, we will stand together for peace. Against the merciless terrorists who threaten every nation, we will wage an unrelenting campaign of justice. Confronted with desperate hunger, we will answer with human compassion and the tools

of human technology. In the face of spreading disease, we will join with you in turning the tide against AIDS in Africa.

We know that these challenges can be overcome, because history moves in the direction of justice. The evils of slavery were accepted and unchanged for centuries. Yet eventually, the human heart would not abide them. There is a voice of conscience and hope in every man and woman that will not be silenced, what Martin Luther King called “a certain kind of fire that no water could put out.” That flame could not be extinguished at the Birmingham jail. It could not be stamped out at Robben Island prison. It was seen in the darkness here at Goree Island, where no chain could bind the soul. This untamed fire of justice continues to burn in the affairs of man, and it lights the way before us.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and his wife, Viviane.

### **Remarks to U.S. Embassy Personnel in Dakar**

*July 8, 2003*

I thank you all very much for coming out to say hello. Laura and I are honored to be here with you all. I’m also, as you could see, traveling with quite distinguished company; our great Secretary of State Colin Powell is with us as well. I want to thank Ambassador Roth and his wife, Carol, for their service to our country.

I’m here to thank our fellow citizens who are serving a great land. Thank you for your dedication and your love of country. I want to thank the foreign nationals who are helping our fellow citizens make sure the Embassy runs so well.

This is an historic trip—oh, there’s the Ambassador. But we are so honored to start our trip to this continent here in Senegal. I had the opportunity to go out to Goree Island and talk about what slavery meant to America. It’s very interesting when you think about it, the slaves who left here to go to America, because of their steadfast—[inaudi-

ble]—and their religion and their belief in freedom, helped change America. America is what it is today because of what went on in the past. Yet when I looked out over the sea, it reminded me that we’ve always got to keep history in mind. And one of the things that we’ve always got to know about America is that we love freedom, that we love people to be free, that freedom is God’s gift to each and every individual. That’s what we believe in our country.

I’m here to spread that message of freedom and peace. Where we see suffering, America will act. Where we find the hungry, we will act. We’re here not only on a mission of mercy; we’re also here on a mission of alliance. And I want to thank you all for helping make that come true.

May God bless you all. And may God continue to bless Senegal and America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1 p.m. at Leopold Sedar Senghor International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Senegal Richard Allan Roth and his wife, Carol. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill**

*July 8, 2003*

I commend the House for passing the Department of Defense Appropriations bill. The House action will help strengthen and transform our military to keep America safe from the threats of this new era. The bill also continues my long-term commitment to improving the quality of life for our troops and their families through higher pay and good benefits. I am pleased the House has acted quickly and in a fiscally responsible manner, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Congress to ensure that we have the resources necessary to support our troops.